

THE CATHOLIC MIND

Vol. XXXVIII.

AUGUST 8, 1940.

No. 903.

FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IS PRESERVATION OF RELIGION IN HOMES OF RURAL AMERICA

JOHN LaFARGE, S.J.

**Homes once pure and prosperous
are laid waste not by grasshoppers
or dust storms but by the infinitely
worse plague of divorce and artifi-
cial childlessness.**

PAPAL DESIGNS ON AMERICA: TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS IN UNDERSTANDING AND TRUTH

J. EDWARD COFFEY

**\$1.00 a year
53 Park Place**

**Issued Semi-Monthly
The America Press**

**5c a copy
New York**

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N. Y.

Reprinted from AMERICA, July 27, 1940

American Youth Congress

GENE TUNNEY

Last July, in AMERICA, Mr. Tunney had the audacity to call the Soviet exhibit at the N. Y. World's Fair "A Colossal Fake." Reprinted and distributed, this article aroused vigilance and action throughout the country. "Big Joe" has been purged.

One year later he warns us again. This time it is Communism in the American Youth Congress, the same boring-in tactics in a different field. This article has been reprinted in 8 page leaflet form.

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53 Park Place

New York, N. Y.

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THE CATHOLIC MIND wishes to announce the following price changes effective with August 1, 1940, issue:

CANADA & FOREIGN

Yearly subscription \$1.50
Single copy 7 cents

Payments by international money order

THE CATHOLIC MIND, August 8, 1940. Volume XXXVIII, No. 903. Published semi-monthly by The America Press, 53 Park Place, New York. Subscription postpaid: Domestic, 5 cents; yearly, \$1.00; Canada & foreign, \$1.50. Entered as second-class matter October 22, 1914, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 4, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rates of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on June 29, 1913. Trade-mark "Catholic Mind," Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

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VOL. XXXVIII AUGUST 8, 1940

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Religion and the Land

JOHN LAFARGE, S.J.

Baccalaureate sermon delivered at Centennial of St. Mary's Female Seminary, St. Mary's City, Md., June 10, 1940.

THE land of Southern Maryland was God's gift to a people who revered and honored their Creator. They brought man's labor and wisdom to the land; and the land brought sustenance and honor to themselves and their families. They can say in the words of the Eighty-fourth Psalm: "Lord, Thou hast blessed the land."

In the midst of all this peace and apparent security, it seems out of place to raise the question: "But shall we keep our land?" Yet this question must be raised. For though God gave the land, man may lose it by his own fault or through the sins of others.

This question is terribly real and urgent at the present time.

HOW THE LAND IS LOST

Across the ocean we have the vision of millions of people, uncounted millions, who through war have been forced to leave the land of their ancestors. In a few hasty moments, in the dead of night, for fear of destruction, they were obliged to pack a few scattered belongings and take to the open road, leaving forever the countryside over which they first tramped as little children going to the village school, where for genera-

tions their families ploughed their acres: the countryside where their parents and grandparents lie buried in the village churchyard. All that centuries of labor and culture contributed to that countryside for a thousand years was crushed and burned out in an instant. Whole populations are transported hundreds of miles into foreign countries. Proud and independent peasant families of the Southern Tyrol, who defied Napoleon's armies a century ago when he invaded their Alpine fastnesses, are now miserably huddled together—strangers, paupers, refugees—in the General Gouvernement of Poland. Farms where for twenty long years men had labored to obliterate the last remnants of the World War are now again laid waste, with a much more fearful and irreparable waste.

Here in our own country what war has not damaged other processes have achieved. We, too, have our deserted countrysides. The wheel of progress has passed over the land, scattering benefits; but in its wake have followed abandoned farms, with a host of social and economic problems. These rise up continuously to plague the nation which has the richest natural resources of any people in the world.

We may say, what difference does it make if we do lose our land? The land is but rock and soil; and man lives by the spirit, not by mere material things.

Perhaps it does not make so much difference to a people if the land is taken away from them by others. If they cannot live by their own acres they may still live by someone else's. But it makes a tremendous difference if they lose their land not because someone has taken it from them by force, but because they have lost the spiritual power to keep it. The land of such a people is abandoned because they no longer can practise the virtues necessary to keep their own homes. They have lost the Christian ideal of the family. Homes once pure and prosperous are laid waste not by grasshoppers or dust storms but by the infinitely

worse plague of divorce and artificial childlessness. A nation of rising and buoyant youth is transformed into a nation of querulous elders. Love, honor, fidelity, cooperation have become meaningless words. With the homes gone the land is gone; it becomes waste or passes into the hands of strangers. With the homes and the land gone, liberty goes, too; and a once free people becomes a nation of slaves.

FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

There was talk in recent weeks that the first line of America's defense is found in the Channel ports of England. I would rather reverse this statement, and say that the first line of America's defense is found in the hearths and homes of rural America. Before the white man came to the shores of the Saint Mary's River the Indians roamed our woods. Long since those Indians perished, and scarce a place name or a chance arrowhead turned up by the plough reminds us of their former existence. The newcomer took the bulk of their land and they had no spirit to preserve the remnant that was left to them. A decade ago the Indians of our entire nation, but a few hundred thousand in number, were but a dwindling remnant of their former glory. Today those tribes which have survived the white man's greed are again multiplying and recovering their depleted ranks. Why? Because their land was restored to them; because they were given the spiritual outlook and the encouragement to home and family life which enable them to preserve and utilize their own property.

Victories in the present frightful war are won by equipment and machines. But these are but temporary triumphs. The lasting victories are won not by the airplane, the gun and the tank, but by the strength of the nation's homes, and those homes are strong when they are built upon the unshakeable foundation of religion.

When I say, therefore, that the first line of America's defense is found in the hearths and homes of rural America, I mean that America's first line of defense is the preservation of religion in those rural homes. Take religion from our homes, and the homes themselves will perish. Take religion from our homes, and the land will drop away from those homes as the trees along the Potomac shore topple over and fall with the caving banks of the river when the tempests blow in from the sea. Take religion from our homes, and all the armament in creation; all the wealth and organization of mighty minds and a huge nation will be as helpless as Chinese paper dragons against a country or government which wills to invade and destroy us.

These are no idle words; no mere ponderings of a pious philosopher. They speak the living fact; and we must face this fact or perish. The war today is not between countries and countries. It is international civil war, and the battle line is between the spirit and brute force, between religion and the forces of irreligion; armed today with propaganda, tomorrow with airplanes and tanks.

POWER OF RELIGION

Two years ago, when visiting France, I asked what was the country's best hope in order to build up the country to its former strength and thereby resist the increasing power of Hitler. Everywhere I heard that the greatest single factor on the restoration of France's defensive power was the growing religious spirit among the young men and the young women of France's countryside. In literally thousands of individual centers this religious spirit was being restored through a nation-wide movement entitled the movement of Christian Rural Youth (*J. A. C., Jeunesse Agricole Chrétienne*). Farm girls and farm boys; and not only girls and boys on farms, but all girls and

boys who lived in the rural districts, of every occupation and condition of life, were seized with a spirit of spiritual conquest: determined to lead a full abundant, unashamed Christian life come what might. The religious practices; the feasts and games and songs of their ancestors were cherished. Old divisions and enmities were forgotten: there was unity, life and courage.

This same fact is noted by the magazine *Newsweek* (May 27, 1940, p. 20) :

Many unprejudiced observers in the past eight months of waiting have thought they detected a growing religious spirit among the peasant boys under arms. . . . In the moment of crisis, it now seems that this latent force of spirit is being rallied as another form of answer to the mysticism which gives young Nazis so much of their drive. Until the German offensive began, the long war of nerves had given little chance for the mobilization of these forces which are intangible, but important, because of their bearing on morale.

The force of arms may crush such a spirit temporarily to the ground; but it cannot crush it forever; and I believe that this religious spirit of the youth of France, Holland, Belgium, nay, too, of Christian Germany, Christian Austria and Czechoslovakia will restore civilization and liberty to Europe even if conquered by a hundred Hitlers.

This religious spirit has arisen not only among the boys under arms, but among the sisters and mothers and sweethearts of those boys under arms. The nation is defended not by its soldiers alone, but just as much, one day say even more, by its women who keep the home fires burning.

PROPAGANDISTS OF IRRELIGION

Here in Southern Maryland we have no such extreme concern for the revival of a religious spirit as existed in certain half-paganized rural districts of Europe. We are a religious people, and our ancient traditions are still with us. But we need to have a

deep concern that the religious spirit which we yet possess shall not perish. This is our greatest single danger. It is greater than any enemy ships or bombs. It is a greater danger than any Fifth Column or other spies or revolutionaries. Or, rather, our real Fifth Column, our real and tangible enemy is the person be he ever so persuasive, ever so kindly and benevolent, who attempts to instil into our young the spirit of religious indifference.

We have had such persons in this Southern Maryland country in the past; we shall have them in the future, whether or not they be with us today, for they are one of the evils of our times.

Let us entertain upon this subject no delusions. Once religion is gone, what will be put into its place? The answer to that question is written in flaming letters across the smoky skies of the present war. When religion perishes in the hearts of the young, its place is taken by the worship of the all-powerful and the all-absorbing State.

The days of the quondam village atheist are gone forever; the man who could deny the God Who made him yet strut about in a self-satisfied pose of respectable virtue. Today, when God, His law and worship, His holy revelation, are torn from the hearts of the young, their place is immediately taken by the brutal totalitarian State. "Believe the State; obey the State; fight for the State!" Or, to be more exact: "Believe; obey; fight for the Dictator who has annihilated any genuine State and has made himself the State in its place!" These are the mottoes which you see plastered upon the walls of the school rooms, from kindergarten to university, of a totalitarian nation.

EDUCATIONAL PROPAGANDA

Let us not delude ourselves that this same philosophy will not come to us; that our own politicians, be they State or Federal, once they have drunk

the heady wine of educational oligarchy, will not in their turn seek to displace the free service of an inconvenient God by the obsequious worship of an almighty Government. The process becomes all the easier when the sway of mere party politics takes the place of a genuine democracy.

With a large proportion of our American people practical pagans, the opportunity is too tempting to be lost, to propagate a new state religion through every educational means at hand; if not through direct, then through indirect and standardizing control.

These ideas will not be expressed as bluntly and crudely as in the mottoes of the Communist, the Nazi and the Fascist dictatorships. They will be veiled under polite, even democratic forms. They will be cloaked in useful and praiseworthy social services. But the spirit will remain; for the worship of the all-powerful State is a subtle affair, and can take a thousand forms with but one single purpose in mind.

In the words of a distinguished American churchman, the Rt. Rev. Fred Ingley, D.D., Episcopal Bishop of Colorado:

The totalitarian states are giving their best trained leaders to youth. No skill is left unused by these irreligious agencies to capture the mind and allegiance, not only of their own young people but the young people of our land and to convert them to alien doctrines, both anti-Christian and atheistic.

Says Bishop Ingley: "If we neglect in our education the heart and soul of man we leave him open to the ravages of secularism and atheism. . . . It is becoming increasingly evident that education without religion may be more harmful than utter ignorance." And he quotes the recent carefully considered statement of the educational commission appointed by the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York:

We are convinced that the great lack in our homes and in our national life is the lack of true, simple religion.

If this nation does not maintain its religious foundation its whole structure will fail.

In spite of the fact that at first we hesitated to include religion in our educational program we have finally and unanimously decided to give religion first place in importance. (*The Living Church*, May, 1940, p. 5.)

RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

Tolerance is a word constantly upon our lips. Yet tolerance degenerates into mere expediency, unless it is based upon the acceptance of some absolute, unchanging Truth, which we accept in common with all those towards whose beliefs we practice tolerance. Unless religion is placed in the very forefront of our thought and action, there can be no such thing as genuine religious tolerance. If irreligion is placed upon an equal footing with religion, toleration itself disappears. For this reason I consider a certain very highly sanctioned type of educational philosophy which acknowledges no absolute truth, but defines democracy as nothing more than the free interplay of competing, but never fully attained truths, as democracy's worst enemy and the breeding ground of future intolerance.

In view of such a danger, such a certainty, no thinking man or woman can treat lightly the efforts of any people or any religious body to preserve religion's place in the education of the young. This is not a matter of sectarian concern; not a question of any one religious body; it is a common concern of all Americans, and of all Southern Marylanders in particular. We may differ in our educational preferences, as we differ in our religious preferences. But we cannot afford, if we rally to the moral defense of our nation or of our local community, to do aught but unite all our moral as well as our material and civic forces. None of us can afford to wish for the abatement or discouragement of the religious practices of any group whatsoever, who are sincerely serving the God Who made them. None of us can afford to wish

or work for the discouragement of the educational practices of any group of citizens who are serving the nation and the community by their preservation of religion in the hearts of the young. It is always easy to provide such discouragement through an ultra-rigorous interpretation of the law against those whose methods may not meet with our own personal preference. It is always easy to use political control and political privilege in such manner as actually to abate and discourage while professing to practise tolerance.

It is easy to pass over with indifference those attacks upon the character and motives of the very Founders of our nation: Washington, Jefferson, the Framers of the American Constitution, which have crept into school textbooks in recent years. These emanate from sources which profess the highest reverence for democracy and freedom, but the most determined enmity for any place for religion in education. It is intolerable for such theorists that these same Founders of the nation were religious men, none of whom could conceive any schooling of the young from which the Name of God was excluded. The school which they knew was the religious school of the Colonies. And it is always easy to raise cries and slogans which recall the battles and the abuses of former years; which arouse fear and disquiet and give birth to suspicions.

Anyone can do these things; they require no great ingenuity or courage. Those who indulge in these practices may even be temporarily immune to criticism. But these practices will bring their fatal retribution in the end. For there is nothing more fatal to any nation than to blast the very foundation of liberty by silencing the full and unconditioned voice of religion.

"Americans who believe," writes a leading educator, "that the love of the Constitution still exists, in the face of the rising tide of totalitarianism, will

not be disturbed by schools in which children are taught to love God and their neighbor, and to obey all just laws." (Paul L. Blakely, in *America*, June 8, 1940.)

WOMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Into your hands God has placed a sacred charge: the homes, the land, the liberty of our people. Men may strike the loudest blows, but the final decision in these matters rests with the women of the nation. Where man's clumsy reasoning fails, a woman's insight will often save the truth. Today the nation, as well as the people of Southern Maryland, need that insight. It needs women whose keen minds and sure hearts will look beneath momentary appearances and see those spiritual truths upon which rest our democracy, our prosperity and our endangered peace. Placing the Kingdom of Heaven first in their own lives, they will do all in their power to see that it is placed first in the lives of their fellow citizens. They will see that religion is honored not with mere lip service, but that its inalienable rights are ever preserved: the right to teach the sacredness of every human personality, without distinction of race, nationality, creed or color, and the right to proclaim the holy Revelation by which this sacredness of the human personality is guaranteed.

If that be your program, graduates of St. Mary's Seminary, you will experience in your own lives and the lives of your descendants the promise made by the Psalmist of old: that "the Lord will give goodness: and our earth shall yield her fruit" (Ps. lxxxiv, 13). The goodness that the Lord God wishes to give to our Maryland country is not yet exhausted; nor has the earth which we here tread yielded as yet but a parcel of the fruit the Creator expects of it: the fruit of countless happy, peacefully united Christian homes.

Papal Designs on America

J. EDWARD COFFEY

Reprinted from the Month (London), June, 1940.

THE period is happily passed when a public message of the Pope to his American flock had to be prudently timed and worded most carefully. Today we may neglect the relics of old-fashioned bigotry once so powerful. And, what is more important, that extreme sensitiveness to "outside interference" and to "entangling alliances," even in the spiritual domain, equaled nowhere perhaps outside the Arab world, is almost completely transformed. It was a curiously synthetic by-product of a too persistent youth, a fancied "distance" and politico-economic independence, which had kept the Catholics of the United States on the defensive, and made their genuine loyalty to the Holy See a distressing political problem, from the close of the Civil War until the occasion of Mr. Smith's tragic candidacy for the Presidency.

The sensitiveness is still there. It constitutes our own peculiar problem of nationalism. It conditions our own particular contribution to the world's work¹ and to the mission of the Church. Only the Pope is no longer an "outsider." Indeed, it would be no exaggeration at all to speak of ten years of progressive "adoption" of the Holy Father by those very elements of our population—Protestant, Hebrew and indifferent alike—which found the "Syllabus" anathema, the Third Council of Baltimore a usurpation, and *Pascendi Gregis* a piece of foolishness. Today they are actually hungry for the *verba vitae* from Rome. They are actually anxious to be recognized as "collaborators" in a program of peace which has finally been narrowed down to its original gospel simplicity. They are actu-

¹ "Acta Apostolicae Sedis," Vol. XXXI, p. 662. 1939.

ally happy to grant their Catholic fellow-citizens the tribute of admiration, where a grudging and anemic legal tolerance more than sufficed before.

Pius XII has characterized this moral miracle "of homage and noble respect,"² of "appreciation of all that unites them to Us in love for the Person of Christ or in belief in God,"³ as "an attitude that encourages a hope which time does not take from Us, which a sanguine mind cherishes, and which remains a consolation to Us in hard and troublous times."⁴ His Holiness modestly refrains from reviewing all that he himself, in the successive roles of Secretary of State and Sovereign Pontiff, has done, unwearingly, to create and to confirm this new "attitude," so richly charged with the potentialities of divine grace.

In the United States it began, roughly, with *Quadragesimo Anno*. This instrument of social reconstruction was eagerly seized upon and put to work by hierarchy, Government and people alike, amidst the widespread ruins of economic liberalism. Here was a really inspired lesson in practical Christianity from the ecclesiastical *magisterium*, destined to commend itself and its august Author with special force to the American instinct for social justice, so sorely in need of *direction* as the world watched the disequilibrium born of one war continue its stubborn task of preparing another. The average American was profoundly impressed by the courageous and measured judgment passed upon morals and institutions by the Encyclical; and he woke from a long sleep to realize that the Pontiff's indignations and sympathies quite largely matched his own. The greatest of his professors and his politicians began to look to Pius XI for the authoritative spiritual direction which their own poor pon-

² *Ibid.*, p. 667.

³ Litt. Encycl. *Summi Pontificatus*, "A.A.S.," Vol. XXXI, pp. 413 sqq. 1939.

⁴ "A.A.S.," Vol. XXXI, p. 667.

tiffs had denied them.⁵ The public attention and welcome given to his pronouncements and counsels, since the great depression began, has been exceeded in no other country in the world. His successor on the throne of Peter had ample opportunity, as he is at pains to note,⁶ to observe the phenomenon at close range in 1936, and to see it confirmed in the unprecedented outburst of sorrow at the passing of Pius XI which came from across the Atlantic in February of last year.

Public events and sensational gestures since the outbreak of war⁷ afford another striking proof of the change that has come over the Republic of Washington and Lincoln: one speaks much less today with misgivings of the "power and prestige of the Holy See," and much more, in affection, of the "Holy Father."

Few documents could be better calculated to reassure the American people in their new-found confidence in Peter's moral guidance than the Encyclical Letter His Holiness recently addressed to them on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.⁸ The Pope might here be talking with the eldest daughter of the Church, instead of the youngest, barely forty years out of her mission swaddling-clothes! So obviously does the Encyclical continue a sacred and universal pastoral tradition, so plainly is it marked by that sureness of balanced judgment, that warm and paternal sympathy, that sense of the *timely* in prayer

⁵ The inspiration of the *National Industrial Recovery* codes and legislation, for example, was patently the social Encyclicals.

⁶ "A.A.S.," *loc. cit.*, p. 660.

⁷ The entire text of *Summi Pontificatus* was inserted in *The Congressional Record* as "a conspicuous historical document"; Mr. Myron Taylor was nominated as President's Ambassador Extraordinary to the Holy See; Mr. Roosevelt's "homily" on the coordination of peace effort addressed to the Holy Father on Christmas Eve, 1939, etc., etc.

⁸ Italian text printed in the *Civiltà Cattolica*, December 16, 1939, p. 433. The same, with Latin original and English translation, will be found in "A.A.S.," Vol. XXXI, pp. 636 sqq.

and plan, which characterize the perennial teaching of Christ's earthly Vicar.

Only the incorrigible skeptic will be proof against the evidence offered by the parallelism between *Sertum Laetitiae* and its forerunner of 1895, the *Longinqua Oceani* of Leo XIII.⁹ Even to the most convinced of the defenders of an indefectible teaching and governing power, it is startling to realize, at a distance of half a century, how exactly our principal American problems were detected in the germ and foreseen in their evolution by the watcher on the banks of the Tiber while the Republic was still largely a struggling infant. Few of our hundreds of post-War writers and lecturers have been so fortunate in their analyses, none so sure in his prognosis, even touching the major issues of our national history! The Pastoral of 1939, a perfect masterpiece of actuality to anyone who knows America more than superficially, treats the identical subject-matter of the Leonine letter,¹⁰ using practically the same order in argument, often the same didactic accent, and always the same tone of fatherly concern for the spiritual progress and problems of a people whom Peter understands and loves because they are his own.

The American must doubtless learn to resign himself to the incorrigibility of his youth—though the Constitution which rules him is, as a matter of fact, the oldest in existence today. Leo XIII called him *validum juvena* fifty years ago,¹¹ and Pius XII pays him the same compliment today.¹² *Mille anni sicut dies una in atriis tuis!* But the persistent youngster

⁹ *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 387 sqq.

¹⁰ This is as true of the historical as well as the doctrinal material. The radio is evidently an extension of the Press apostolate; mission zeal is not new, if much more intense; and *Longinqua Oceani* even contains an excellent adumbration of Catholic Action as it was to be organized by Pius XI and illustrated in America, notably by the *Legion of Decency* for morality in the cinema. Cf. "A.A.S." loc. cit., p. 398, and *Vigilanti Cura*, "A.A.S." Vol. XXVIII, pp. 249 sqq. 1936.

¹¹ *Longinqua Oceani*, loc. cit., p. 388.

¹² *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 635.

has probably too long enjoyed the perverse pleasure of believing himself exceptional, immune from classification because his energy was so unbounded, like that of the chick in the barnyard which ran about so fast that it could not be counted. Now that he is pausing to take thought upon problems the implications of which reach the ends of the earth,¹³ it should come as an encouraging assurance to note from these twin documents spanning half a century that he has long ago been "classified" by the Prince of Christendom and assigned his definite part in a universal mission, his definite share in the dispensation of Divine grace to the family of nations.

Penetrating to the heart of the Encyclical Letter, he cannot fail to be further struck by the poised accuracy of the Pontiff's judgment touching specifically American ideals and institutions, as it is set down in historical review and in a studied constructive program of action.¹⁴ After so many colored and prejudiced views of the world's *enfant terrible*, it is a relief to have his virtues and his many liabilities set in a sane perspective, with central problems clearly distinguished from unessential detail, and faults of character from momentary mischief. No Pontifical document, for instance, has ever encouraged the oversimple notion that America is "a Protestant country."¹⁵ This one makes reference to our "separated brethren" only to praise their respect for religion (President Washington friend of Archbishop Carroll), and to invite them graciously to join with us in solv-

¹³ He has already yielded himself generously to the mission apostolate as His Holiness does not fail to notice (*loc. cit.*, p. 637). American missionaries of both sexes are numbered by the hundreds in each of the several mission-fields.

¹⁴ The Encyclical is divided into two substantially equal parts, treating the progress and problems of the Church in America.

¹⁵ The effective Protestant membership has never, after the period of "immigration" which began roughly in 1850, exceeded one-third of the population of the United States. The largest Protestant sect, that of the Methodists, has never claimed more than one-half the Roman Catholic membership. Nearly two-thirds of the American people have no definite "Church"-affiliation.

ing a social problem which concerns us all (distinguished support for *Quadragesimo Anno* is noted and invoked.)¹⁶ Nor does the Encyclical borrow anything from a journalism that remembers the Chicago of the gangsters' machine-guns and forgets the Chicago of the Eucharistic Congress. It nowhere gives special prominence to our crimes or to our millions—features of Uncle Sam's life which have for long formed the chief interest of foreign secular opinion. It even appears from the text that Shylock can forget his moneybags long enough for an occasional attack of "liberality"¹⁷ or of zeal for souls.¹⁸ On the other hand, neither secular nor religious opinion will find the strictures on the godless school and the plague of divorce and birth-control—another potent echo of the prophetic *Longinqua Oceani*¹⁹—exaggerated or severe; and they will assuredly detect the sense of real need in the accent placed on education, within or without the Christian family, in school, Press and radio.

The immediate and grateful reaction of American Negroes, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to the affectionate reference made by the Holy Father to their needs and their merits²⁰ may serve as one sign among hundreds of the dawning realization across the Atlantic that Peter is a Father even before he is a Pedagogue. Impossible not to be sensitive to the note of genuine and cordial sympathy in these paragraphs, as there was no escaping it in the eyes and discourse of the Cardinal Pacelli of 1936, who fitted so perfectly into our American background, as well in the air as on land and sea! To say nothing of the material toys he has made to work so efficiently that he is in constant danger of worshipping them, the American is pro-

¹⁶ The reference to Mr. Roosevelt and his "New Deal" administration is thinly veiled.

¹⁷ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 644.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 637.

¹⁹ *Longinqua Oceani*, loc. cit., p. 395.

²⁰ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 637. Cf. Pope's *Sollicitudo Huiusmodi* Negroes, *New York Times*, November 12, 1939.

verbially proud of his Constitution, of his Catholic school system, of his parish life—the three outstanding witnesses to his spiritual originality. He has already noted with joy that the Vicar of Christ is proud of them, too. Leo XIII had occasion to warn him, while praising the complete liberty of action and respect enjoyed by the Church in the United States, not to erect such a system into an ideal.²¹ The present letter bears formal witness to the fact that the tolerance clause of the Constitution continues to serve us well; and we have lived to see every Pope since Leo XIII insist even solemnly²² on this freedom of action as a fundamental minimum right claimed by the Church Militant. Without this stipulation of the Constitution, which in many other respects is a most "Papistical" charter, Catholic education and Catholic parochial activity in the United States would certainly have enjoyed a far less "thriving life" than that which Pius XII here commends,²³ and the Bride of Christ would still be lacking one of the most striking proofs in existence of her beauty and vitality. For here on the soil of a "new world," with a fair field open for competition between all religions for the first time in history, she has demonstrated in less than one hundred and fifty years, as the successor of Saint Peter is delighted to see,²⁴ with the sorry ruin and disintegration of more than two hundred and fifty "sects" about her, that she alone possesses in her chaste womb the seeds of Life eternal.²⁵

No less consoling to the American reader will come the inference, after a careful perusal of the historical part of the Encyclical, that the spectre of "Americanism" seems now definitely laid. Serious misgivings

²¹ *Longinqua Oceani*, loc. cit., p. 390, ". . . neque universe licere vel impedire . . ."

²² Cf., *inter alia*, *Mit Brennender Sorge* and *Summi Pontificatus*.

²³ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 636.

²⁴ *Longinqua Oceani*, loc. cit., p. 390; *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 635.

²⁵ There are at present more than twenty-one million Catholics in continental United States. It is the only organized religious group exerting a various influence upon social life in America today.

concerning certain currents in our spiritual life clouded the pages of *Testem Benevolentiae* at the turn of the century.²⁶ There is no mention of "active and passive virtues" in the anniversary epistle, nor any suggestion that the common Father is preoccupied with any peculiar problem of American Catholic asceticism. As for the all-pervading apostolic problem of our hundred million non-Catholics, the paternal language and sentiments of His Holiness²⁷ will recall vividly the saintly and unforgettably American figure of Cardinal Gibbons, who could never bring himself to regard the Protestants—nor even the Jew and the rationalist—otherwise than as truant or prodigal sons, a mere few hundred years absent from "home."

The memory of Cardinal Gibbons will also be evoked, along with a select list of the heirs to his immense influence on Church and State alike, in the timeliness and prudence with which Pius XII here sounds his "vigorous but paternal"²⁸ warnings, and traces his plan of action. The danger of sterile immersion in merely material pursuits,²⁹ and of a watered-down, naturalistic substitute for religion, which Chesterton has called "service of service in place of service of God," was never more convincingly—nor more graphically—set down than in this Pontifical Pastoral. The incidence of this dilemma of purely material *versus* purely Christian ideals—it is increasingly evident that no third choice is possible—upon individual happiness and social life suggests to His Holiness, as it has already to many cultured non-Catholic laymen in the United States,³⁰ the urgent need of reforming the secular school and of renewing the family on a specifically Christian basis. The picture of the sanctity and unity of the Christian family here presented, with

²⁶ *Testem Benevolentiae*, *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, Vol. XXXI, p. 470. 1896.

²⁷ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 643.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 639.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 638.

³⁰ Notable on the long list are Drs. Alexander Meiklejohn, William Angel Robert Hutchins, Nicholas Murray Butler, Mortimer Adler.

its implied condemnation of anti-natural restriction and development, is as moving and as pertinent as any document in the vast literature of Papal social teaching. Insistence is rightly laid, as by Leo XIII, upon the formation of a clerical and lay *élite*, with unity of direction urged, after much chastening experience, for the apostolate of Press and radio. The North American College at Rome, along with the Catholic University of Washington, will be justly proud to see reaffirmed the importance of the special role confidently assigned to them in the scheme of defense and reconstruction.³¹

But most welcome of all at this moment of unprecedented confusion and panic in the economic world will be the vigorous and carefully-worded paragraphs on the social question.³² If we may here detect no substantial doctrinal development as to the relations between Capital and Labor, there is fresh emphasis on the fact that social justice must be considered essentially a matter of equitable distribution in the economic order, and that it primarily concerns the rich in their quality of stewards or dispensers of the patrimony of the poor.

The related controversies on unemployment and on the labor union are brought peremptorily up to date by proposing a judicious division of responsibility³³ and a wide field for discretion in the choice of structure and method. The "revolutionary" trade union has never attained to the proportions of a problem in the United States, though there was a moment, before the historic intervention of Cardinal Gibbons in favor of the "Knights of Labor," when it was feared that secret society ideals and strategy would compromise or make impossible Catholic collaboration with the labor movement. There is nothing contrary to Catholic principles in the activity of either

³¹ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 640.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 641, post *Longinqua Oceani*, loc. cit., pp. 391, 392.

³³ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 643.

of the great contending syndicates which today dispute the field of organized labor in America, despite the ever-present and ubiquitous danger of subversive elements from within. Responsible directors of the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. have both repeatedly voiced their complete accord with the aims of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Unfortunately, they are not yet able to agree on a formula of institutional union or federation. Pius XII pointedly suggests one when he invokes "the principles of wholesome liberty . . . serving the lofty norms of justice and honesty . . . harmoniously dedicated to the common weal of civil society."³⁴ Such a formula should be acceptable to all men of good will in an America so stubbornly jealous of its "principles of wholesome liberty." The Holy Father does not hesitate to invite all to gird themselves to this urgent task. And he concludes with a flattering and affectionate reference to a wish which Americans have long deeply cherished: "What a proud distinction it will be for the American people, by nature inclined to grandiose undertakings and to liberality, if they untie the knotty and difficult social question by following the sure paths illuminated by the light of the Gospel, and thus lay the basis of a happier age!"³⁵

Finally, the sympathy and affection of *Sertum Laetitiae* are as unmistakable as its teaching and pastoral content are traditional, scrupulously impartial and timely. May the latest Apostolic Benediction imparted to the "youthfully vigorous and illustrious American people" effect speedily what it signifies. The "crown of our holy joy" will be complete if it serves to banish definitely from the sensitive American heart the last remnants of diffidence—indeed they have almost departed—towards the doctrine and designs of the *Mater et Magistra Gentium*.

³⁴ *Sertum Laetitiae*, loc. cit., p. 643.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 644.

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